

REMARKS

The present claim amendments are responsive to the Examiner's concerns noted in the Office Action.

Summary of the Response

Claims 1-14 and 17 have been amended. Claims 18-20 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1-17 remain pending in this application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the present application as amended are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter of claims 1-17.

Claim Objections Under 35 USC 112

Claims 1-19 have been objected based on certain informalities. Applicant thoroughly reviewed and revised claims 1-17 (claims 18-19 have been canceled) to correct the noted informalities. Further, in anticipation of allowance of the case in the next action, additional claim amendments are made to present the claims in better form. Claims 1-17 now meet the requirements under 35 USC 112.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 102

Claims 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ilcisin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,880,770).

While Applicant does not agree with the rejection, in the interest of forwarding this case to early allowance, Applicant canceled claims 18-20.

Applicant notes that given that the cited reference has been applied as a 102(e) type reference, it may be overcome by "swearing behind" the effective date of such reference. However, given the cancellation of the rejected claims 18-20, Applicant has not yet considered the option of swearing behind the reference, but reserves the right to do so at a later date should it become necessary in a continuation application.

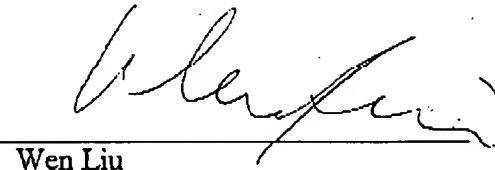
Given the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-17 and the traversal of the objections to such claims above, claims 1-17 are therefore allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of all the foregoing, Applicant submits that the claims pending in this application are patentable over the references of record and are in condition for allowance. Such action at an early date is earnestly solicited. **The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned representative to discuss any outstanding issues that may not have been adequately addressed in this response.**

Respectfully submitted,

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